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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

No. 3. Vol. XXIII C.2 MARCH, 1944 THREEPENCE

READERS' VIEWS ON RECONSTRUCTION — Page 43

HEALTH PLAN'S CHALLENGE TO THE SERVICE

F the Education Bill, as Mr. C. P. R. Clarke suggested in these pages some months ago, fers "a thrilling and inspiring challenge" to cal government, how much more thrilling id inspiring is the challenge offered by the overnment's plan for a National Health ervice? Here, at last, we have two peace ms worth fighting for—the chance, for the rst time in the history of this or any other ation, to create a people physically, mentally, id technically equipped to build the better orld of which we dream.

With the broad purpose of the plan—the obilisation to the service of every citizen, at e charge of the nation as a whole, of all that ience and skill can contribute towards the are of sickness and the promotion of positive ealth—all men of goodwill will be agreed. othing like it has been hitherto conceived.

In its details, the plan is a truly British asterpiece of compromise—compromise be-ween the views of the three political parties, etween the claims of the public service and e strongly individualistic medical profession, etween the municipal and the voluntary ospitals, between national and local govern-ent, and between the various types of local uthority. And, as with all compromises, no ne party to the scheme is likely to be satisfied ith the share allotted to it.

We hope later to deal extensively with the roposals in a series of authoritative articles, id we trust that our readers, many of whom re especially well qualified to comment upon eir social and administrative possibilities, ill assist us to focus upon it that constructive iticism which the Government has invited. /e hope, too, that the National Executive ouncil and Conference will direct their houghts to the plan and, if it be possible, fer their conclusions to the Government as n expression of the united view of the local overnment service which will have such an ssential part to play in its fulfilment. Here, e can do no more than offer a few random id provisional thoughts upon it.

Unrivalled Opportunity

To local government the plan presents not nly a challenge, but an unrivalled opportunity -both immeasurably increased by the weak-esses which the need for compromise has mposed upon the suggested structure for the ew health service.

Greatest of those weaknesses is the retention -inevitable, no doubt, in face of the attitude f the bulk of the medical profession—of rivate, fee-paid medical practice. The scheme ffers free and comprehensive medical and rgical treatment to all. It offers adequate emuneration to the doctors providing that rvice. At the same time it leaves the doctor ee to charge a fee to the patient willing to ay it. Does it not follow that, although the octor is expected to give his fullest services the patient coming to him under the scheme, e will in fact tend to give a higher standard of rvice to the fee-paying private patient; and that the private patient will demand such higher standard—with the result that the medical service provided under the scheme will be in danger of ranking as "second grade"? The plan recognises this danger and the necessity "to ensure that the interests of the patients in the public service do not suffer thereby"—but it makes no suggestion how this may be achieved. The only practicable solution, short of abandoning this concession to the medical profession, will be to make the public salaried medical service so efficient, complete, and attractive that both doctors and patients will prefer it to private practice or a combination of both. Here is one challenge to local government.

Another weakness is provided by the retention, side by side though with some measure of public control of the latter—of the municipal and voluntary hospitals. In suggesting that this is a defect of the plan we do not belittle for a moment the magnificent service which the voluntary hospitals have rendered and are still rendering to the public. But it seems both unnecessary and undesirable that a system which depends upon charity should be retained as part of a system for which the public pays and the benefits of which it may claim, not as a gift but as a right. In any event, however, it is difficult to see how the voluntary hospitals could long outlive the introduction of a national health service of the type proposed. When all may obtain full hospital treatment free of direct charge there will be no impetus either for the well-to-do to contribute to hospitals by bequests and donations or for the poor to insure against sickness through hospital savings schemes, and the voluntary hospitals will thus lose the bulk of their present income.

What of the virtues of the plan? The major ones are obvious and have already been noted. Of the minor benefits, not least will be the disappearance of the nursing home, an institution heartily disliked by both patients and the better type of doctor. In a national health service there can be no room for profit-making—and in many cases profiteering—at the expense of the sick.

Another benefit will be the encouragement it will give to the development of group medical practice and, more particularly, to the family health service of which the Peckham Health Centre has been a pioneer, based upon the twin principles of seeking positive health rather than the alleviation of sickness and of treating the family as a single unit. Here is a fine opportunity for local government and the medical profession to show what they can do to revolutionise the national outlook on matters of health and disease—and for other sections of the local government service providing community centres, parks, playing fields, gymnasia, swimming-baths, and opportunities for mental recreation and cultural activity, to link their activities into one co-ordinated scheme of national well-being.

Step to National Standards

Yet another virtue of the plan will be the co-operation it will enforce between local authorities in the proposed regional hospital areas and between local authorities and the medical profession in the national and local health services councils. Though the scheme is based on the existing structure of local government, its introduction of the regional element paves the way towards that wider form of control which many regard as inevitable for other services than those of health, and it remains sufficiently flexible to be fitted into plans which may be eventually agreed for the general reform of the local administrative structure. The second form of co-operation envisaged, though possibly tending to derogate from the complete democratic control of local government, should, if all parties concerned show true collaboration, assist in making local government less of a closed organism and more responsive to popular demand than it is today.

One provision of the scheme is of special interest to all local government officers. "All doctors in general practice who join in the new relationship with their patients; and rely largely in future on public funds for their normal livelihood," states the White Paper, "must be treated on a similar footing; the terms of their remuneration, the general conditions to be observed by them, and the rights to be enjoyed by them must be nationally negotiated and settled." NALGO will heartily approve that declaration—and it will, we trust, lose no time in pointing out that what

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is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander and that if doctors in public service are to enjoy nationally negotiated salaries and conditions of service, so must lawyers, administrators, engineers, educationists, librarians, and the rest of the nation's local civil service.

The plan for a National Health Service is, as we have said, a compromise between many conflicting points of view. It is an ingenious and plausibly argued compromise, but it can succeed only if all concerned—the Government, the medical profession, the local authorities, the local government service, and the public—agree to sink their differences, to sacrifice some of their jealously held preconceptions, and to work together in wholehearted collaboration with the public interest as their single goal.

Demands on the Service

Upon local government it will make unprecedented demands. Hitherto, the municipal health services have catered largely for the poorer section of the population and, notwithstanding notable exceptions in many areas, have tended in others to follow standards of service which can only be described as mediocre. In future, with the whole population to serve, they will be required to adopt standards of service, of treatment, of equipment, not only as good as, but better than, private medical practice provides for the better-off sections of the population today. Of the readiness and ability of the local government service to adopt such standards we are certain ; it is not upon it so much as upon the local authorities that the demand will fall for a changed outlook upon the function and scope of municipal service. The pressure of that demand and the impetus it will give the citizen to take more interest in his local government and to elect councils of the quality his needs require will do nothing but good.

Fulfilment of the plan, then, will call for hard thinking, hard work, statesmanship, and a single-minded spirit of devotion to the public welfare. Given the exercise of those qualities among all concerned, it may prove to be the greatest measure of social advance yet attempted in this or any other land.

Mr. Willink at Conference

MR. HENRY WILLINK, the Minister of Health, has accepted an invitation to address this year's NALGO Conference during the first morning session—on Friday, May 26. Delegates—and especially those with personal experience of his magnificent work during the London blitz, when he was Special Commissioner in charge of rehousing, and also of his keen interest in the reconstituted Whitley Council—will, we are certain, give him a warm welcome. Whether he will disclose the Government's ideas on the future of local government may be doubted, but at least he will have an opportunity of learning something about NALGO and of forming a personal impression of its quality, significance, and readiness to work for the improvement of the service. Let us hope the impression will be a good one.

More Appointments Scandals

NALGO is pledged to defend local government against its detractors. But local authorities sometimes make that far from easy !

Take Hoole urban district council. Last November, this authority advertised for a clerk to the council and chief finance officer, at a salary of £500–£600. Eighty-three officers applied for the post, each accompanying his application, as instructed, with copies of three recent testimonials.

In December, the council held a special meeting to consider the applications. This meeting decided, by eight votes to five to throw all the eighty-three applications unopened into the wastepaper basket and to appoint the rating and valuation officer as temporary clerk for the duration of the war. At a subsequent protest meeting of ratepayers it was alleged that one of the eight councillors supporting the resolution was not sure afterwards which way he had voted, while another was so deaf that it was doubtful whether he had heard the resolution at all !

St. Albans, too

Then there is St. Albans. It advertised for an office manager and senior committee clerk, at a salary of £500, also demanding three testimonials. St. Albans did open the applications. It selected a short list of six and invited them to attend for interview. Two days before the date fixed, after they had, no doubt, made all arrangements for leave of absence, the candidates were sent telegrams cancelling the interview. Next day, each received a letter informing him that the council had decided not to make the appointment after all !

The best comment on this sort of thing was provided by one of the seventy candidates who —as we reported some months ago—suffered similar treatment at the hands of Faversham borough council. " It is an easy thing," he wrote to the mayor of that borough, " to advertise a vacancy. It is another matter for a busy official to compile a fitting application, get it typed, and obtain testimonials from equally hard-pressed people ; and it is high time that members of councils gave some thought to the cumulative effort involved. Action of the type your council has taken is a disservice to local government which, if persisted in, must undermine public confidence and eventually lead to the important powers of appointment now exercised by local authorities being handed over to independent and impartial appointments boards."

Close the Ranks

THE spirited reply we publish this month from Mr. J. L. Davies to those members who are continually calling for the expulsion of chief officers from NALGO brings a breath of fresh air into a controversy that is becoming both stale and unprofitable.

Admittedly, there are chief officers in NALGO whose membership does not benefit the Association. But so also, as Mr. Davies points out, are there rank-and-file members in the same category—members who will use the Association when it will be to their personal advantage to do so and repudiate it when the obligations of membership seem likely to involve them in some personal inconvenience or handicap. To mention a single and by no means isolated example, the Association some time ago " blacklisted " an appointment (not for a chief officer) for which a grossly inadequate salary was offered, and sent a letter of protest to the local authority concerned. " Do you want me to report this letter to the council ? " the town clerk telephoned. " It won't do the Association any good if I do—for we have had 200 applications for the job ! "

Is it not time that this division of the Association into two camps, this mutual recrimination, this heresy-hunting and search for scapegoats (strongly reminiscent of Hitler's successive campaigns against " Jews," " Bolshevists," and " Plutocrats ") were ended ? As with every organised group, we have both sheep and goats in our ranks—all ranks. It was chief officers, very largely, who founded the Association. It is chief officers, very largely, who have given it the power and authority it now possesses, and who direct its affairs today—not because they are chief officers, but because they have been freely chosen by the members as a whole as the best men for the job.

NALGO's problems and opportunities today are much too big for us to waste time and weaken the Association by internal bickering and recrimination. As Mr. Davies points out, we must " close our ranks and go forward to a brighter and better future for local government officers as a whole, without the bugbear of rank distinctions." In that task every member, from office-boy to town clerk, has a part to play. We want the best members, both juniors and chiefs, to lead the Association—the others we can afford to ignore.

Educating Our Masters

WE have described in the past many fine achievements by branches in educating the public in local government—and in this connection we would invite every branch executive member to read the fine article by Bertram Finch this month on Sale's Brains Trust and to consider following its example.

Now Hawarden and district branch has gone one better—it has started educating its councillors. At the end of each monthly meeting of the rural district council a lecture is given to the members by one of the chief officers. The clerk opened the bowling two months ago with a talk on the development of local government and the proposals now being discussed for its reorganisation. The accountant came next, on local government finance, and other officers are to follow.

This is a splendid idea which many other and bigger local authorities might adopt with advantage both to their members and their officers. British local government rightly relies on the amateur administrator—but the best amateur in every field of activity is he who is prepared to listen to and learn from the professional expert. Hawarden councillors are to be congratulated on their recognition of this truth.

But Hawarden council is a progressive body in other ways. In encouraging contrast to Eton rural district council, which was reported the other day to have refused to allow two Eton boys studying civics to attend its meetings, it recently invited senior pupils from schools in the area to watch it at work. Later, boys and girls in the senior form of Hawarden county school met in the council chamber and there went through the work of three of the council's committees. The children elected their own chairmen, but the clerk to the council and other officers assisted in their normal capacity. This is public relations along the right lines.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR CONFERENCE

April 1—Publication of " Local Government Service " containing the preliminary agenda, and despatch of annual report of the National Executive Council to conference delegates. (To enable district committees to discuss the agenda on April 1, if they wish, special proofs will be sent to them on or about March 21).

April 8—Voting papers for the elections of honorary officers and the N.E.C. to be sent to branches.

April 15—Amendments to notices of motion on the preliminary agenda to be received at Headquarters by 5 p.m.

May 1—Publication of " Local Government Service " containing amendments to notices of motion.

May 8 Voting papers for the elections of honorary officers and the N.E.C. to be received by the divisional secretary or divisional officer by 5 p.m.

May 12—Final Conference agenda to be sent to representatives. Last date for notification of division of voting strength.

May 26—Conference at Central Hall, Westminster (9.30—12.30 : 2.0—5.0). Meeting of education correspondents at 5.30.

May 27—Conference (9.30—12.30 : 2.0—5.0).

May 28—Annual meetings of ancillaries (NALGO Provident Society, 9.30 ; Approved Society, 11.0 ; NALGO Building Society, 3.30 ; Logomia, 5.0). Special Conference Service at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 2.0. p.m.

It is the aim of "Local Government Service" to encourage the fullest freedom of opinion and expression within the Association. Unless the fact is expressly stated, therefore, views put forward in the journal—whether in the editorial columns or in signed articles — should not necessarily be regarded as expressing the considered policy of the Association.

Reform of Existing Structure Better than Regional Bureaucracy

By "FABIUS"

THE reports of the associations of local authorities on the structure of local government, ranging from the proposals of the County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations to the lack of proposals by the associations of non-county borough, urban, and rural district councils, illustrate Lord Acton's dictum that "all power corrupts." Similar observations may, with equal justice and the completion of the quotation "absolute power corrupts absolutely" be applied to the centralising zeal of Government departments. The predatory ambitions and bureaucratic aspirations of the latter are encouraged by the pursuit of sectional interests by local authorities.

Happily, however, there is an increasing realisation of the threat to democratic local government and a disposition among all types of authority to unite in combating both the menace of Whitehall despotism and the threat of a substituted and modified form of regional bureaucracy. The Government's refusal of an inquiry into the machinery of local government before any re-distribution of functions indicates that the customary machinery, imperfect though it may be, must be utilised and the future evolve from the present.

District Councils Must Stay, But—

It appears, then, that the existing structure of local government, maintaining the two-tier system of county councils and county districts must be the alternative to increasing bureaucratic control whether centralised or decentralised. To succeed, that structure must be capable of meeting the demands of the times and providing adequately for the extension and technical improvement of many existing welfare services by their administration over larger areas. In their persistent opposition to loss of functions and status, the county districts overlook the undoubted demand for the improvement of services which they themselves cannot meet. Such services, whilst responsive to public opinion, must nevertheless be efficient in the light of future standards. The administration of some services over larger areas may entail a transfer of functions, but it should not necessarily mean the complete exclusion of local responsibility and initiative.

The county district is an indispensable administrative unit for certain essential services, a fact which is illustrated by the adoption of that unit as the general basis for national registration, food rationing, and other war-time services. Its retention is inevitable. The physical redevelopment and reconstruction of their areas and the provision of houses and amenities will make heavy calls on the energy and initiative of the county districts. Properly tackled, these problems should far offset any loss of autonomous executive power over large-scale technical services.

Call for Larger Areas

The demand for larger areas for these latter services must, under the existing structure, be met by their transfer to the county councils and the county boroughs. This was done with success in regard to roads and public assistance under the Local Government Act, 1929, and a further application of proved policy is to be found in the new Education Bill. The selection of county councils and county boroughs to exercise functions and powers in relation to major services should result in effective administration and lead to a general and comparative uniformity of provision, which is greatly to be desired. In certain cases, administration might even, with advantage, extend over the combined areas of two or more such authorities.

In order, however, to secure the effective participation of the county districts in such services, utilise their local knowledge, experience, tradition, and goodwill, and produce smooth administration without rigid uniformity,

RECONSTRUCTORS' FORUM

Here and on the following page we publish the views of three readers on a fundamental problem of local government reconstruction. Similar constructive articles on other post-war problems of local government will be welcomed.

the county councils, whilst retaining general direction and control, should be required to delegate the detailed and local application of such services to the county districts or, in suitable cases, to combinations of them. This delegation should be made and accepted in a spirit of partnership and sharing of responsibility within a defined framework. The new Education Bill affords an opportunity. Recognising the need to maintain local interest in education in county districts, it provides for the delegation of substantial functions to divisional executives representing individual county districts or groups of them.

The county district should, furthermore, act as the link between the major authority and public opinion in the various county areas, both leading and interpreting that opinion. To this end, standing consultation and exchange of views should be provided in each county area between the county council and associations of county districts, to foster the progressive development of services with which they are both mutually concerned.

At the same time, there is a need for a sustained and continuous improvement of the existing local government structure without resort to a fundamental re-organisation. This improvement should be directed to a reduction in the multiplicity of smaller authorities and a removal of existing anomalies. It should aim to produce new areas based on an enlarged community of interest. In the development of these areas, urban and rural interests should not necessarily be regarded as competing and incompatible.

The first general review of county districts undertaken under the Local Government Act, 1929, resulted (allowing for the creation of new non-county boroughs) in a reduction of nearly one-fifth in the original number of county districts. An extension and improvement of this machinery, coupled with its steadfast application, the abolition of the inviolability of non-county boroughs from merger and disestablishment, and the inclusion of both county councils and county boroughs within the scope of review, would go far to produce better units. Existing local authorities might, with advantage, be encouraged to formulate proposals for amalgamation, merger, and revision. Let the present authorities "while still respecting tradition, preserving continuity, and blending the old with the new in that amalgam which alone is the material of true progress," produce new units adapted to the needs of the times. These will surely be preferable to untried units possessing logical and uniform executive powers, but without functional experience in the tradition of local government.

Post-War Needs Demand Regionalism —and it will Benefit the Officer

By E. L. LEEMING, M. Inst. C. E., Surveyor, Urmston U. D.

ACCELERATED by the war, local authorities are faced with the prospect of larger doses of regional direction or control. Our first reaction is to hate it; to resist any change in our present system and to call regionalism "bureaucracy."

On the other hand, we all subscribe to the principles laid down in the Atlantic Charter which envisage international or world planning.

Where do we stand? On the weak pedestal of isolationism or the strong foundation of co-operation? That seems to be the issue.

Our war effort is a large-scale regional operation run by a combination of states—certainly, it is not being run by "private enterprise"; it is really a fine piece of inter-state planning.

Fear seems to govern most of our actions or rather to account for our inactions. Some local authorities which object to regional government are largely afraid that they may lose their power to keep down the rates.

We have all observed the stimulating effect of grants made from regional or national authorities; such as county grants, unemployment, and other Government grants. The reason for this is that the cost of doing things is spread over a wider community. Herein lies the strength of regionalism. Insurance works in the same way. County council finance is an excellent example of pooling; the richer districts help the poorer ones, and the county rate is more or less common to all the local authorities in the county administrative area. The post office letter service is perhaps the best example of a pooled flat rate: the short distance letters pay for the extra cost of carrying the long distance ones.

If, therefore, we supplement the county rate by further flat charges for housing, sewage disposal, all highway, and other services, the rate charges would be equalised to a considerable extent. In other words, you would have a common rate which could be increased slightly for some specific local purpose if need be.

Regionalism is, of course, more than equalisation of finance—it is the blending of the various interests of the different authorities into one common plan. Local control need not disappear; indeed, the onus would be on the local authority to present its estimates to the central body for approval or modification.

If regionalism is to succeed, it is essential for each representative on the regional body to sacrifice individuality in order to think regionally. For twenty years I have been a member of the Manchester Regional Planning Committee, whose members for the most part insisted on thinking parochially, with the result that little or no regional planning was done in that period: we succeeded in marching step by step and shoulder to shoulder towards the *status quo*. And in that same twenty years, Soviet Russia rose from a state of utter chaos and poverty to the powerful position she holds to-day. So much for our pre-war regional planning!

But if officials must sacrifice their individuality and local pride, there are ample rewards in regionalism. It will be easier to move around and to have access to higher positions and responsibility. At present, jobs move in grooves: county men get county jobs; city men, city jobs; urban men, urban jobs; rural

men, rural jobs; and seaside men get the seaside jobs. Under a regional scheme, ability should count for more and promotion would be more rapid; a wide outlook would be engendered.

The most recent example of the working of regionalism is in the formation of the National Fire Service. True, the service is well-staffed and well-equipped because of the experiences during the bombing periods of 1940-41. Nevertheless, it is a good example of the transfer from municipal control to regional and national control. Much greater opportunities have been afforded: the whole power of state finance has been placed behind the organisation, and there is no cheese-paring in regard to proper development and the provision of the most modern equipment. Contrast this with the difficulties that the average surveyor meets with if he wants one or two new pumps in connection with sewage works; and the heartaches of the Council when it has to consider paying for them!

Many of us have seen men who were ranked as ordinary firemen in a municipal service rising to controlling positions in the N.F.S. with salaries of £500 or £600. It is clear that the regional control of this service will eventually lead to higher efficiency and greater economy, both in personnel and in equipment. There is no more case for taking this service back to municipal control than there is for running the Army or the Navy under municipal control.

The time is fast approaching when bodies must be set up to deal with our post-war problems from a regional point of view. Some of our services are easier to treat in this way than others, and I suggest that the constituent local authorities might readily agree to the establishment of suitable regional boards with power to plan a particular service—in consultation with other related services.

Services Needing Regional Control

Control over our rivers and waterways, for example, affects the following services, now under separate control:

Rivers pollution or conservancy;
Sewage purification;
Water supply;
Inland navigation; and
Control by the "Catchment Board," i.e. land drainage and perhaps fisheries.

All these matters are inter-related and should be co-ordinated under a regional board, which in turn would be responsible to a national board. The ever-increasing consumption of water per head of the population and industrially may create a serious problem in the near future if control is not exercised over all water resources.

The regional boards would be composed of suitable men who would represent (*a*) the public, (*b*) the technical side, and (*c*) administration (including accountancy). Each board would deal primarily with policy and would employ a technical and administrative staff to deal with day-to-day problems.

The national board or boards would consist of representatives nominated by the regional boards, with perhaps others from interested Government departments—although national boards would be more effective in their control than normal Government departments.

Other services which are regional in character are housing, highways and street lighting, transport, gas and electricity, public health (including hospital services and child welfare), education, and the provision of recreation; all these services could, in my opinion, be dealt with more efficiently on a regional scale. This would lead to a uniformity of rating, and that in itself would remove one of the greatest objections to regional government. There will still be ample scope for local committees to deal with local matters delegated to them by the regional authority.

(Continued at foot of next column)

Build Popular Local Government on the Parish as Unit

By T. C. BARTON

IN the verbal war about the future of local government, the main struggle centres round the status of the small authority, particularly in rural areas. The fight is one between the elimination of the small uneconomic unit in favour of units big enough to manage their affairs efficiently and economically, and the desire to retain the "ancient rights and privileges" of those authorities which fear absorption. The arguments on both sides have been widely publicised and need not be repeated here.

I want, however, to suggest a means of reconciling these conflicting interests by creating local authorities of a size which makes for optimum efficiency, whilst preserving the interests of the small authority and the live interest of the inhabitants.

Maintaining Local Interest

The essence of local government lies in the word "local," with the implication of local self-government. To retain this essential feature, remote control must be avoided as far as possible. If the democratic principle is to survive, decentralisation must be carried to the furthest possible point—otherwise local interest will perish.

The lowest practicable unit of local government is the parish. I suggest, therefore, that the structure of local government should be built upon parish units. Let us revive the parish council, in both town and country. Where practicable, existing parishes could be retained, but where these are unsuitable or out of date, new parishes should be created. Large towns should be divided into sections. In rural areas, villages would be grouped round a market town or other natural centre. Elasticity should be the guiding principle and rigidity strictly avoided. Local authorities of any type should not be of a fixed kind, based on population, but should be variable, being composed of such towns or villages as may conveniently be grouped for administrative purposes at an economic and efficient level.

The picture visualised is of a variety of all-purpose authorities, of equal powers but unequal size, consisting of variable numbers of parishes. The all-purpose authorities would be grouped into regions on the same principle—a region comprising all authorities which formed a homogeneous area. Regions would, therefore, vary in size and population. It is such variety which helps to form the English character.

Voting by ratepayers would be limited to parishes. All adult ratepayers and residents in a parish would vote by ballot for the members of the parish council. This council would nominate, from its members, representatives to sit on the council of the all-purpose authority which, in turn, would appoint its delegates to the regional council. By this means, local representation would be secured at all stages. By requiring citizens to vote for the parish councillors in order to be represented on the all-purpose authority (in which the main power would reside), this system would encourage them to take an interest in local affairs and consequently in local government generally.

Elasticity should also be assured in determining the number of delegates from parish councils to form all-purpose authorities of manageable size, according to the total number of parishes in an authority. The system of triennial retirement could be retained throughout.

Division of Functions

The regional council would make decisions on all matters affecting the region as a whole, and constituent authorities would be compelled to put such decisions into effect, co-ordinating their activities where necessary.

The functions of all-purpose authorities are self-evident in their title—they would embrace the administration of everything.

Since administration by the parish would generally be uneconomic, the functions of the parish council would be advisory only. It would meet regularly, discuss local matters and projects affecting the whole area, and instruct its delegates how to vote on the main council.

To create and maintain local interest, parish meetings should also be held at regular intervals and whenever important measures are contemplated. Items of general or special interest could then be discussed "in open court," grievances and prejudices aired by the audience, and explanations and advice offered by the councillors on the platform. The "man in the street" could speak his mind, and public-spirited individuals would be encouraged to serve on the parish council—an excellent training ground. The party influence in local government would also be lessened.

This plan should help considerably to create an enlightened public. To provide a basis for discussion, I have presented it in broad outline only, ignoring details.

Local government officers are being urged to conduct a vigorous public relations policy. What better method than by attending parish meetings and giving the ratepayers the benefit of their knowledge?

(Continued from preceding column)

As Mr. Eden said recently, the old order is dead—as dead as Wotan and Thor. We are at the dawn of a new era! Things are moving with great speed: science and machinery are producing material wealth at an enormous rate, and this must reflect itself in a much higher standard of living for the people. Houses and other buildings can be erected with great rapidity and there is no need to be sentimental about the demolition of existing buildings.

To-day, some 25 million British men and women are engaged in the business of war of one kind and another, and our problem will be to re-settle them all with full employment into peace-time pursuits. Does anybody think that unplanned private enterprise can do more than touch the fringe of the problem? Are we going to accept as an ideal condition the right of private enterprise builders to be let loose on the landscape?

It is a well-known rule in asylum administration that lunatics never combine, and this simplifies the job of looking after them.

To cope with the enormous problem of reconstruction after the war, the utmost co-operation and co-ordination of local authorities into a powerful regional and national effort will be absolutely essential.

For Reconstructors

TWO forthcoming conferences organised by the Metropolitan area education committee will be of special value to all interested in the future of local government:

April 1 and 2 (at County Hall, in conjunction with the Institute of Public Administration and the Institution of Professional Civil Servants): **"The Expert in the Public Services."** Papers by **L. A. C. Herbert**, chairman, Institution of Professional Civil Servants; **Dr. F. H. Smith**, town clerk, Woking; **Prof. H. Levy**; and **Mr. Arthur Collins.**

April 29 (at Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the Staff Side, Ministry of Health Departmental Whitley Council): **"Relationship between Central and Local Government Staffs."** Principal speaker, **G. D. H. Cole.**

Details may be obtained from A. E. Odell, honorary secretary to the committee, 59, Parkside Drive, Edgware, Middlesex.

Civil Defence is Perfect School for To-morrow's Administrators

By PETER GLYNN

'O-DAY'S sapling is to-morrow's oak. The assistants of one generation are the iefs of the next. Many of those now gaged on civil defence will be the adminis-itors of peacetime.

But all workers in civil defence are not there choice ; they may have been seconded to or, perhaps in Munich days, the A.R.P. e was passed to a junior officer and he has own up with it. To some, it provides an portunity for giving energetic service to eir fellows ; to others, it is an irksome trusion into normal life, bringing with it a ass of specialist problems, unlikely to arise ain in the same form, and apparently uncon-cted with either pre-war or post-war nditions. They fail to see that this war-ne experience is an excellent preparation for peacetime career.

eed and Adaptability

The good administrator must rise above chnicalities and details. Wide expert know-lge is not the primary qualification for ccess. He is concerned more with general inciples, and their application to whatever enomena come his way. In this respect, vil defence has provided an acid test of ministration and a hard school for the ture administrator. There was no tradition custom on which to build. In 1939, one uld not turn up past papers for precedents " blitz " techniques. Ability to tackle fresh d unexpected problems was of more value in a sound knowledge of municipal routine. When raids came, events happened quickly. nditions over wide areas changed overnight. 1940, lorry-loads of people from London rived at places like High Wycombe un-ralded and with no particular goal. Towns med for their air of retired respectability came the Meccas of evacuees or the targets enemy airmen. No longer was there time practices and the leisurely testing of schemes d methods ; the arrangements of the moment ght be upset by the raiding tactics of the rrow ; trial and error succeeded each other rapid sequence, as staffs struggled to adopt, apt, and improve their machinery.

e Flexible Mind

Often, the men on the spot had to act first d inform " the Committee " or the Regional mmissioners afterwards, hoping that official ction would be given. All this underlined h a vengeance the meaning of " Govern-nt by Circular," the unreality of remote ntrol of local affairs, the need for the ministrator to keep in constant touch with men and material he directs, and the ngers of ambiguity. Town clerks, medical icers, and A.R.P.O.s have seen both ends the chain as never before. They have not ly received circulars " coming through the ndow like snow," but have been obliged to ail the information in fresh circulars, and ve perhaps been surprised to find what rdens and others have read into their efforts. nat better schooling could there be for a nce as different from the last as this war from the last, a peace in which the same derlying note of urgency will prevail ? What ter object-lesson in the essentials of bureau-cy than that of having oneself to swim rough a sea of forms and schedules ?

If this were not enough to ensure flexibility outlook and method, there has been the reasing emphasis on mobility in civil ence resources, to offset the rigidity which local officer may have found higher up strated by the experience of a West untry surveyor who, making an urgent verbal ort to the appropriate local headquarters 'phone, got the reply : " Impossible " !)

With the need for flexibility, the local government officer has also had impressed upon him the benefits of co-ordination, not only via the " nerve-centre " of main control, but by seeing at first-hand the intricate working of voluntary agencies. He has seen, perhaps with some surprise, how interweaving influences link up the whole community in a vast net-work of associational activity—churches, schools, clubs, youth movements, societies of one sort or another—working in close har-mony, providing a machinery more sensitive and valuable than any which political design could produce. It is to be hoped he will bear in mind the absurdity of trying to reduce all these voluntary agencies to a uniform pattern and thus admit by the back-door the philosophy that we are fighting to defeat in the field.

Especially to the local administrator has both the working of the constitutional machine and the defects of hurriedly delegated legislation been evident, both in its parliamentary and departmental aspects. The local government officer has been given a practical example of regionalism as a possible new form of author-ity ; he has been able to watch (with the help of his daily paper) Parliament at work, and to find the results embodied in official instructions on his desk a day or two later ; while the com-pleteness of some Ministerial arrangements must have taken even old hands by surprise.

Interesting, too, is the way in which officers have found new uses for statistical knowledge and research, and how invaluable the ability to dramatise (for the benefit of the council or the public) in diagram form the facts of a situation and the trend they reveal. Hence-forth, too, they will not be easily led by official figures : for statistics emphasise as nothing else the need for the *whole* truth.

All this experience is directly related to future peace-time activity, apart from the possibility of a long-term civil defence pro-gramme. The Civil Defence Act, 1939, may have overridden local by-laws but general civil defence activity touches local government peace-time practice at every point : the routine elements of co-ordinating, controlling, fore-casting, and organising ; the recording, accounting, grants-in-aid procedure, etc., are the same as ever, " only more so." The officer who has continuity of experience from pre-war days has seen constitutional history and practice being made at first-hand.

His experience, gained in civil defence administration, will be peculiarly valuable, because it has been gained under conditions far more exacting than normally obtain. It is, indeed, well to remember the great oppor-tunity for testing and developing capabilities which the Home Front has provided, and to assess such experience at its true worth. It will be invaluable in the post-war years, when we may expect many unforeseen situations and unexpected developments to tax initiative and to call for speedy and intelligent adaptation.

Coventry Plans to Maintain in Peace Communal Spirit of the Blitz

EVERY after-dinner speaker, every foreign visitor to Britain during the past three years, has commented on the remarkable change that has taken place in our community life. People, they tell us, are more interested in one another, more ready to help, more considerate, less self-centred and acquisitive, more eager to combine in activities that will be of general rather than individual benefit than they were before.

Though we may discount a good deal of the high praise, putting it down to deliberate morale-building propaganda or the innocent desire of our visitors to say what they imagine we expect of them, there is some truth in it. Notwithstanding the black market, the rent, furniture, and toys rackets, and other re-minders that we still live in an acquisitive society, every inhabitant of a " blitzed " town must have experienced an unexpected friendliness on the part of most of his neigh-bours. The civil defence services, the Home Guard, the fire guard, the W.V.S., and the many other wartime aid services, were all built up from volunteers, many of whom entered them at considerable sacrifice of leisure and with no thought of personal advantage—and though many of these organisations are now com-pulsory, most of their members perform the often tedious duties they exact willingly and sometimes with real enthusiasm. We have learned not only the value, but the personal satisfaction to be derived from communal service.

What is to happen to this new-found com-munity spirit after the war ? Is the demobilisa-tion of the Home Guard, the wardens' ser-vice, the fire guard organisation, going to return us to our pre-war isolation in which, in the middle-class suburbs at least (it was never true of working-class areas), each family retires into its domestic castle and looks on the rest of the world as either hostile or untouch-able ? Or are we going to keep the spirit of mutual help alive and to adapt it to tackle the no less difficult problems of the peace ?

Coventry, at least, has given an answer to the question, and has chosen the second alternative. Coventry was the first of Britain's towns, outside London (which is not one but a score of towns), to feel the full weight of the " blitz." In terms of bricks and mortar, the Luftwaffe knocked the heart out of it. But not in terms of humanity. On the contrary, as in every other town in which they fell, its bombs merely broke down the barriers between man and man, releasing a flood of human sympathy and self-sacrifice the like of which had probably never before been experienced.

That fellow-feeling has been maintained ever since, and provides the driving force behind the ambitious plans for a finer Coventry that are now being prepared. But its leading citizens realise that it cannot survive indefinitely without some machinery to canalise and direct it into useful activity. A spirit, however fine, can act only through a body. To provide that body, they have now launched the Coventry Guild of Citizens.

The object of the Guild, which has already secured the enthusiastic support of the Mayor, Mrs. Alderman Smith, the City Council, and the civil defence and religious organisations in the city, is " to foster the spirit of com-munity service and a sense of civic responsi-bility in all citizens." How it will set about doing that has not yet been precisely deter-mined, and will no doubt be left largely to the decision of members of the Guild themselves. Organisation is to be on the basis of the civil defence scheme, with which the citizens are already familiar. First, meetings of citizens are being held in each civil defence division, and with the support of the leaders of voluntary organisations, to consolidate interest and enrol members. Then, these members will be brought together into ward groups and, if membership justifies it, into smaller groups within the ward.

A preliminary list of suggested activities for the groups includes lectures and dis-

(Continued at foot of next page)

Attack Ignorance and Apathy with a Local Government Brains Trust

By BERTRAM FINCH, Deputy Town Clerk, Sale, and Public Relations Correspondent, North Cheshire branch

WITHOUT detracting from the splendid efforts of our friend Codd, of Stretford, where they do things in grandiose style, we next door, in Sale, must claim the honour of being first in the field with a local government Brains Trust. Well over a year ago, on November 18, 1942, the curtain rang up in Sale Town Hall on a blushing and slightly bewildered Brains Trust. On the sound principle of trying it on the dog, we then faced a hundred colleagues and personal friends only. Despite sceptics and cynics, every seat was taken. The looks of glee on many faces could scarce conceal the fervent hope that one or all of us would come a "nasty flop." The remainder of the audience seemed divided between the incredulous who, notwithstanding the town clerk's solemn assurance that he alone had seen and selected the questions, still suspected that the Trust had somehow managed a preview; and those who were still certain that we couldn't answer the questions anyway.

All proved wrong. Our qualms were needless, and the notable success of that evening (apart from £5 odd for B. & O.) has been repeated in later public sessions, culminating in a pressing invitation (at once accepted) to visit in turn all ten groups of wardens in the borough, with a membership of over 700. The bold spirits who launched the venture have now capitalised their temerity by becoming Resident Members of the Trust.

But enough of fanfaronnade! How is it done?

The idea originated at one of the monthly post-council inquests—was it in The Queen's or The Railway?—one's mind is apt to be confused on these occasions. By common consent, chief officers were barred (from the Brains Trust, not the inquest). Quite apart from questions of dignity, the idea of a chief officer being unable to answer a "sitter" might do untold harm, whereas if a mere deputy could not answer, it could always be argued (in theory) that he had his chief to fall back on. Since then we have revised our views on this, having evolved a technique (a la Burke if need be) for answering all and sundry—all except *one* question each session: the audience then gets a terrific kick out of being able to stump the Trust, and goes away delighted.

The basic ingredients were agreed as being one Practical Man, one Theory-cum-legal Man, one Man-to-say-where-the-money-goes-and-how, one Elected Representative of the People, one Educationalist, and—if obtainable—one Woman. Throw in a good batch of questions, and stir well by a Question Master with a touch of whimsy. The Resident Members are now the deputy town clerk, the deputy surveyor, and the rating officer, with the baths superintendent as a genial Question Master.

Our principal stipulation, before accepting a "sitting," is that sufficient questions should be guaranteed. Twenty to thirty make a good evening. These must all have a definite bearing on local government—an enormous field, stretching from the powers of parish councils and the origin of mayors, to the need for a Ministry of Social Security.

Questions on civil defence are ruled out, and those on officials (other than their functions) are discouraged, although at times we have to accept the challenge of such oblique ones as "How is it that corporation officials can dictate to the elected representatives of the people?" (After talking at length upon the necessity for expert advice, and the doctrine of *ultra vires* and powers of surcharge, we discovered that the questioner was alluding to the local acceptance under pressure of the Bolton Award—a sore topic.)

"Thin Ice" Questions

Despite a precautionary disclaimer that any opinions expressed are not official, but purely personal, we have to be adroit over such "thin-ice" suggestions as a compulsory retiring age for aldermen (another touchy local topic).

A frequent question inquires the difference between a county council, a county borough, a municipal corporation, etc. This always enables the deputy town clerk to get in his favourite crack about the apocryphal county alderman (or was it a West Country dean?) who could never distinguish between an urban district council and a rural district council, except that one was always corrupt and the other always incompetent, though he could never remember which.

The kind of question which starts "Why does not the corporation do this . . . or that . . . ?" gives golden opportunity to explain the relationship of county and borough, and to rub in again and again the limitation of powers of *all* local authorities. There is a deep-rooted conviction that the town hall is the seat of All Power, and that the powers of councils (not to mention their finances and man-power) are unbounded. Ample scope for public relations here until the day, perhaps, when the negative doctrine of *ultra vires* is whittled down somewhat and the powers of district auditors curbed.

Judging from the questions, much mystery appears to surround the status and functions of aldermen. Some questioners seem to regard these as Superior Beings endowed with mystic powers, a view not always shared by the Brains Trust.

Questions on the future of local government are inevitable, and whether they are purely local or more embracing, the opportunity is always taken to drive home the unanimous conviction of the Trust (which includes pre-regionalisationists as well as "antis") that whatever the form of local government, the democratic basis must predominate. Questions on regionalisation in one guise or other have been fought out repeatedly, and there have been "second thoughts" on it.

Generally, the questions reveal surprising ignorance upon even the most elementary aspects of local government—its functions, its powers, its limitations, and its machinery—and this in a district which prides itself upon its standard of education, culture, and civic consciousness. There is, too, a recurrent insistence on small finance—"Why does not the corporation allow discounts for prompt payment of rates?" etc. In fact, questions bearing upon the payment of money, differences in assessments, and the like tend to predominate, but we console ourselves with the thought that, even if such questioners are hardly idealists with their eyes upon the distant star of Perfect Local Government, finance is part of the woof and warp of its immense pattern.

Frankly, we expected more questions of the type found under *Scientia Potestas Est* in an esteemed and learned contemporary—such as: "What is a single private drain and why?" Instead, the majority of questions ask for opinions rather than information. This tended at first to bring out the platform manner in some members of the Trust, a defect since ruthlessly remedied. Occasional outbursts of rhetoric, even of reminiscences, are permissible, but questioners want information, not eloquence.

What is the Good of It?

Many people—not least our wives—ask what we think we achieve by all this. Could not our spare time be better spent? Our first answer is that anything which brings enlightenment as well as enjoyment is all to the good. Secondly, we believe in our job, and in the great future of local government so long as it remains democratic. All too often the public overlooks what a large-scale training ground in democracy local government really is—and unless we maintain a lively interest in the democratic way of life, we shall head for some form of semi-fascism which will defeat the victory of the war.

Local government has often been misrepresented, and Brains Trusts and the like can play a big part in the counter-offensive against ignorance and irresponsibility—also against the old-standing antipathy of the governed for the governors. Public opinion is rarely with the public official, and it is doubtful whether we shall ever eradicate from our national make-up that inherent distrust. Brains Trusts, however, give the man-in-the-street the chance of meeting his own officials face to face, hearing them, and proving their mettle with a fire of questions.

At the moment, there is an uprush of interest in matters governmental, particularly amongst people who were never previously interested. Women, youth organisations, civil defence personnel, and others, are all being brought into closer touch with the civic authorities. Brains Trusts can stimulate that interest and help to destroy the old apathy. But there is still far too much irresponsible talk about scrapping this and that in local government, and dark hints of "cleaning up" after the war. Unless the present machinery and its achievements is explained, and fully understood by the people, it is useless to talk of Reconstruction.

(Continued from preceding page)

cussions on matters of civic and national interest—in which local and national reconstruction will naturally take a leading part—the circulation of literature, and visits to places of special interest in the city and outside it. Later, no doubt, many more practical activities will suggest themselves. Even on the modest basis at present planned, however, the Guild seems likely to play a notable part in the post-war life of Coventry. To the citizen, it will provide opportunities for acquiring knowledge of civic affairs, of participating in civic government, and of rendering unselfish service for the common good, while to the city as a whole it will bring a keener and more widespread public interest in its life and problems and a better communal activity and spirit.

Here, it seems clear, is the beginning of a movement of great potentiality—a real link between the citizen and his government of which NALGO, as an organisation, and many of its individual members have long seen the need. Too often do our municipal authorities and staff work in relative isolation from the citizens they exist to serve, cut off behind a wall of misunderstanding, distrust, and sometimes of positive hostility. To the citizen, local or national government is a mysterious "they" who do or fail to do things he wants or does not want. How rarely does he regard his government as "we," for the success or failure of which he has a personal responsibility? It is one of NALGO's objects, expressed in its public relations' policy, to strengthen all links between the administrator and the citizen, and we must, therefore, give a warm welcome to the Coventry Guild of Citizens, and urge members to do all they can to encourage similar development in their own areas.

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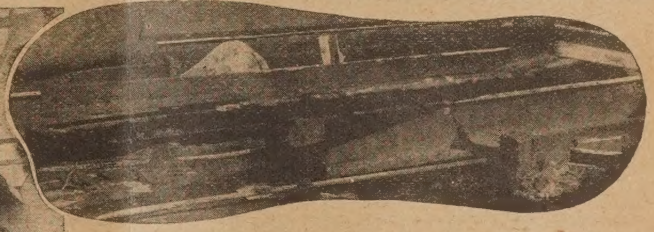


This building collapsed through RUST!

At first glance it looks the result of an air raid or earthquake, but look more closely and you will see where the saboteur RUST has been at work. And this is just one of his efforts to undermine our war efforts — and peace efforts.

Metallising will prevent corrosion and give added life. Write to the technical advisory board about your particular problem.

THE ASSOCIATION OF METAL SPRAYERS

THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD ON THE BRITISH *Wire* SPRAYING PROCESS, THE APPLICATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PROTECTION AGAINST CORROSION AND THE RECLAMATION OF WORN PARTS : THERE ARE MEMBER FIRMS IN ALL PARTS OF GREAT BRITAIN
ISSUED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF METAL SPRAYERS, BARCLAYS BANK CHAMBERS, DUDLEY. PHONE: 4045

M-W.47

NALGO ROLL OF HONOUR

KILLED OR DIED ON SERVICE

Athorn, A/LA. T. W., 20, F.A.A., R.N.V.R., engineer's dept., Pontefract.
***Bain, Gnr. R. H.,** R.A., rent collecting dept., Stirling.
Banks, W.O./A.G. G. L., R.A.F., clerk's dept., Stretford (on operational flight).
Cooper, Sgt. W.O./A.G. E., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Doncaster.
Cornelius, Cpl. T. J., R.A.F., Torquay (in S. Africa).
Cummins, Cpl. B. E., R.C.S., treasurer's dept., Croydon (in Italy).
Dean, L.A.C. H. J., treasurer's dept., Cambridge (in India).
Edgecombe, L.A.C. J., R.A.F., Adwick-le-Street U.D.
Howes, Sgt. W. R., R.A.F., Erpingham R.D.
***Hubbard, Sgt. K.,** R.A.F., accounts dept., Norfolk.
Jacques, F./O. J. R., R.A.F., Newport (Salop) U.D.
Lawton, Sub-Lt. W., F.A.A., Bentley-with-Arksey U.D.
Leake, Sub-Lt. J. W., F.A.A., libraries dept., Leicester.
Megins, Gnr. D., clerk's dept., Glamorgan (whilst prisoner in Far East).

ALARM CLOCKS FOR EARLY RISERS

The Association has been allotted a limited supply of permits for the purchase of alarm clocks by members.

The permits are available only to those members whose work requires them to wake between midnight and five a.m. and who do not already possess an alarm clock or other means of being called.

Application forms for the permits may be obtained, through branch secretaries, from NALGO district officers. When completed, they should be returned to branch secretaries who, after satisfying themselves that each applicant is entitled to a permit, should send them direct to Headquarters.

The issue of a permit gives no guarantee that a clock can be obtained.

Metcalfe, Sgt.W.O./A.G. H., 29, R.A.F.V.R., Tadcaster (formerly branch treasurer).
Philpot, Sub-Lt. A. E., F.A.A., engineer's dept., Wolverhampton.
Richards, F./O. E. C. D., 25, R.A.F., St. Marylebone.
Sherratt, Tpr. W., Tank Corps, probation officer, Rotherham.
Smart, L.A.C. J., surveyor's dept., Glamorgan (whilst prisoner in Far East).
Smith, Pte. A., R.A.O.C., treasurer's dept., Rotherham.
Strothard, Lt. F. W., 25, Light Infantry Regt., Tadcaster.
Taylor, Sgt./P. G. R., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Rotherham.

MISSING

Brown, Ft./Lt. R., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., South Shields.
Dawson, Writer R. M., R.N., treasurer's dept, Oldham (presumed killed).
Day, Sgt./P. B. J., water dept., Leicester (presumed killed).
Fern, Sgt./P. W. E., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Doncaster (believed killed).
Johnson, Sub-Lt. J. B., F.A.A., electricity dept., Coventry (presumed killed).
Lenton, Sgt.-Nav. R. W., 21, Coastal Command, electricity dept., Manchester.
Sudds, F./O. G. H., R.A.F., finance dept., Sevenoaks R.D.
Thomas, Sgt./Obs. M., R.A.F., education dept., Mountain Ash.
Wilkinson, F./O. S., 26, libraries dept., Manchester (believed killed).

PRISONERS OF WAR

Cook, Lt. R. A., Hailsham R.D. (in Germany).
Croft, Capt. F. L., R.A., clerk's dept., Doncaster (in Libya).
Davies, Pte. W., engineer's dept., St. Helens (in Germany).
Fiddler, L./Cpl. H., treasurer's dept., Doncaster (in Libya).
Green, Spr. R., Adwick-le-Street U.D. (in Libya).
Holling, Sgt. G., surveyor's dept., Doncaster (in Thailand).
Lovell, Pte. H., public assistance dept., Doncaster (in Libya).
Podmore, N., 21, airports dept., Manchester (in Far East).
Richards, Ft./Lt. G., R.A.F., surveyor's dept., Doncaster.
Sparrow, Sgt. L., Essex Regt., clerk's dept., Chelmsford R.D.
***Thompson, Sgt H. E.,** R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Leicester.
***Timms, F./O. P. W. B.,** R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Hemel Hempstead.
***Walker, P./O. A. J. S., C.G.M.,** R.A.F.V.R., asst. valuation officer, Lambeth (in German hospital).
***Yeats, L./Cpl. W.,** 3rd Corps of Signals, libraries dept., Brentford and Chiswick.

REPATRIATED PRISONERS

†Price, Pte. E. W. A., Staffordshire Regt., treasurer's dept., Wolverhampton.
Russell, Gnr. H. J., electricity dept., Fareham.
†Scott, L./Sgt. L. E., R.A.M.C., asst. sanitary inspector, Hailsham R. D.

ESCAPED PRISONER

***Colenso, Cpl. R.,** R.A.M.C., asst. sanitary inspector, Wirral U.D.

** Previously reported missing. † Previously reported prisoner.*

BACK HOME AGAIN

W. A. Ratcliffe, borough engineer's dept., Hendon, who lost a leg while serving as a L./Bombardier with the R.A. in Tunisia, has been discharged from the Forces and has resumed his appointment at Hendon.

CORRECTION

By a most unfortunate error we announced last month that **Lt. A. P. K. Byrnes, R.N.,** electricity dept., Clacton, was missing, believed killed. Happily this announcement was, as Mark Twain said of his own obituary notice, "grossly exaggerated"; Lt. Byrnes is in this country, safe and well, and we express sincere apologies to him and his wife for the distress the announcement must have caused them.

AWARDS TO MEMBERS

D.F.C.

Blakeman, F./O. A. W., 31, R.A.F.V.R., Stafford—"in recognition of many successful operations against the enemy, in which he has displayed high skill, fortitude, and devotion to duty."

Pepperdine, F./O. R. P., 29, R.A.F., welfare dept., Manchester—"This officer has completed a large number of operational sorties, in the course of which his crew sighted five enemy submarines and attacked four of them. The last of these was pressed home in the face of very heavy enemy fire. His ceaseless vigilance and skill have undoubtedly been the primary cause of three of his crew's successes."

Smith, F./O. E. M., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Wakefield.

D.S.M.

Flavell, H.M.M.L. J., R.N., electricity dept., Lichfield.

M.B.E.

Smither, Capt. H., electricity dept., Bromley.

Wilmington, Lt. (temp. Capt.) **R. H.,** R.E., engineer's dept., Poole—"In recognition of gallantry and distinguished service in the Middle East."

M.C.

Senior, Capt. V. J., R.T.R., treasurer's dept., Harrow—"For distinguished leadership."

M.M.

Jacob, Gnr. (Act. Bdr.) **D.,** R.A., Ribble Navigations Dept., Preston—"For gallantry during the landing in Italy."

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES

Fuller, Ord./Sig. R. C., R.N., electricity dept., Bromley.

Griffin, Gnr. R., libraries dept., Southwark—"has received the thanks of General Anderson, Commander of the 1st Army, for gallantry in action, devotion to duty, and the high example set."

Harris, W./O. I., G. C., engineer's dept., Hampstead—"In respect of the Tunisian campaign."

Paget, Sto. G., gas dept., Pontypridd.

"BEST SET OF PAPE I HAVE MARKED"

NALGO Prisoners' Succe

"The best set of papers I have been c upon to mark . . ."

"A remarkably good performance, answers well above the usual standard . . ."

"The general level is much higher than of the other papers . . ."

These are among the comments made by examiners on the papers submitted by e NALGO prisoners of war who sat rece for the Association's intermediate examina in Stalagluft III, Germany.

All eight passed the examination, collec eight distinctions between them, and all now working for the final. They were coac by the NALGO Correspondence Instit the courses being sent to them free of ch under the Red Cross scheme.

NALGO'S HOTEL IN NORTH WALES

Bookings are now being accepted for Easter a the holiday season. Early application is essenti

Inclusive terms for members and dependent

£4·4·0 per week

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Inquiries to Resident Manageress, Cefn-y-Myn Private Hotel, Rhos-on-Sea, N. Wales.

The prisoners who are putting their enfor leisure to such good work are Sgt. N. S. Fis (Cheshire C.C.), Sgt. E. W. Penn (Glouce C.C.), Sgt. M. Kelly (St. Marylebone), Ft.- N. C. Bizley (Bristol), Sgt. R. Buckingh (Richmond, Surrey), Sgt. T. L. S. Flana (Leeds), Sgt. R. A. C. Hooper (Bath), Sgt. K. S. Carter (Cardiff).

Another NALGO prisoner, Lt. P Coomber, of the finance department Catford, has passed the I.M.T.A. intermed examination.

SALARIES AND SERVICE CONDITIONS

NORTH WESTERN AND NORTH WALES

Essential Works Order.—The decision of the local Ministry of Labour tribunal in the case reported last month, where an officer of a gas undertaking had been prevented by his employing authority and the national service officer from accepting a more responsible position with another undertaking, has been received. It is in favour of the officer, who has now started in his new job.

Grading Appeals.—The appeals committee of the Lancashire and Cheshire Whitley council met in Manchester on February 3 to consider an application by a local authority to degrade a position which had previously been up-graded by the committee. The committee found against the corporation. A number of appeals from officers of a local authority were deferred pending investigation into the duties of the appellants in relation to the duties of other officers in the same authority who were not applying for regrading.

Upon the application of an urban district in Lancashire for review of the salary of an officer holding joint appointments as surveyor and gas and water engineer, the provincial council has recommended an inclusive salary of £800 p.a.

NORTH EASTERN

Durham city council has agreed to adopt the provincial council salary scales in full.

Bishop Auckland U.D. has agreed to lift the ceiling for war service pay from £225 to £550 p.a.

SOUTHERN

The following authorities have become constituent members of the South Midlands provincial council: **Abingdon R.D., Hungerford R.D., Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D., and Ventnor U.D.**

SOUTH WESTERN

The following rural district councils have become constituent members of the South Western provincial council: **Bradford and Melksham, Cricklade and Wootton Bassett, Honiton, Mere and Tisbury, Shepton Mallet, Warmley, and Yeovil.**

NALGO PROVIDENT AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

Pass Book Audit for 1943

To facilitate the annual audit of the pass books of shareholders and depositors in the NALGO Building Society and of contributors to the various schemes of the NALGO Provident Society, and to ensure their return to members with the least possible delay, the books should be sent to NALGO, 24, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1, in accordance with the following programme:

Metropolitan district—between March 6 April 1.

North Western and North Wales and No Eastern districts—between April 3 and May 3.

Yorkshire, East Midland, West Midland, Eastern districts—between May 15 and June 2

South Eastern, Southern, South Western, So Wales, and Scottish districts—between June 26 August 5.

Pass books should be accompanied by evidence Association branch membership—i.e. the member's scription card Subs/1, or an individual or group certifi from the branch honorary treasurer—unless the inve or contributor is not eligible for membership of N A L C Should this evidence not be readily available, howe the forwarding of books should *not be delayed*. A rec of cases in which proof of membership is not rece will be kept at Headquarters, and the proof will obtained later.

Cost of Living up One Poi

The Ministry of Labour cost of living index increa one point last month to 200, representing an increas 29 per cent since the outbreak of war.

Nalgo Addresses

Headquarters (all departments).—**The Gen Secretary, NALGO, 24, Abingdon Street, Lond S.W.1** (Telegrams NATASSOC, Parl., London; Teleph WHitehall 9351).

"Local Government Service" editorial—Edi 27, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1.

"Local Government Service" advertisement A. Darby's Advertising Agency, Cobham House, 24, Bla Friars Lane, London, E.C.4.

District Officers: Metropolitan—T. M. Kersh 27, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1 (WHitehall 935

North Western and North Wales—H. Corser, Mount Street, Manchester 2 (Blackfriars 7668); **Yorksh**—W. Cecil Wood, 12, East Parade, Leeds (Leeds 2486

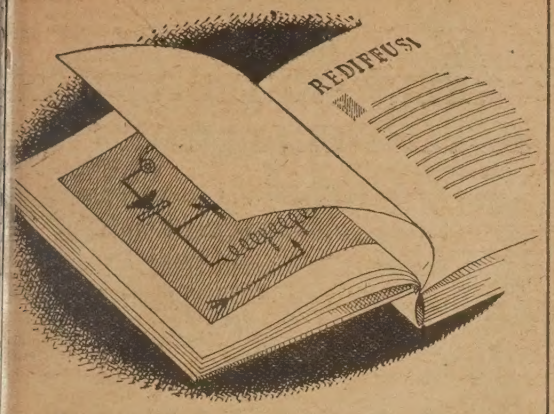
North Eastern—W. J. Upton, Milburn House Dean Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Newcastle 2490

East and West Midlands—J. E. N. Davis, 14, Earlsbu Gardens, Birchfields, Birmingham 20 (Birchfields 512

Eastern—F. Thomas, 54, New Street, Chelmsf (Chelmsford 4347); **South Eastern**—A. Procktor, S House, Pudding Lane, Maidstone (Maidstone 442

Southern and South Western—N. M. Woodco 16, The Crescent, Taunton (Taunton 2779); **So Wales and Monmouthshire**—A. H. Geary, 11, P Place, Cardiff (Cardiff 1646); **Scotland**—J. L. Robs 67, West Nile Street, Glasgow, C.1 (Douglas 0404).

Women's Organiser—Miss A. Gaywood, 24, Abingc Street, London, S.W.1.



Opening of Chapter iii

25 years ago we touched with reverent fingers those curious boxes bristling with valves, coils and crystals, studded with dials and switches, linked up with dry cells and wet cells. Twice daily they would produce (if we were lucky) the magical voice of Savoy Hill in the headphones, "hello, everybody . . . . . this is 2 L.O. . . . "
That was wireless in the George Stevenson stage: "brutal but it worked." Then science began to simplify and streamline. Valves went out of sight; coils disappeared from view; batteries no longer cumbered the carpet; headphones became a museum piece. Tuning reduced itself to the niceties of three knobs . . . . two knobs . . . . *one* knob. Reception had civilised itself. There was still a next step. The same programme still didn't necessarily sound the same way in two different towns—or even in two neighbouring houses. It was still at the mercy of local conditions and individual apparatus. It might be pretty good or terribly bad. Wired broadcasting opens Chapter iii. Rediffusion replaces aerial and receiver by direct line reception and a switch in the wall—just like the light switch. News and entertainment of unvarying quality can be laid on at will to any subscribing home in the area—just like the telephone service. Good reception is standardised as well as good transmission.

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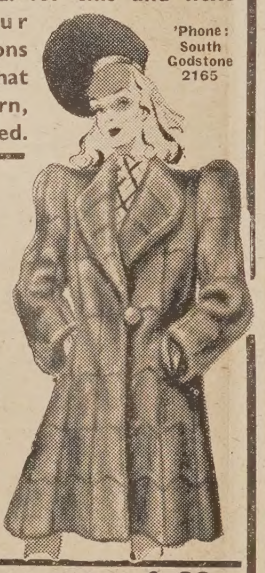

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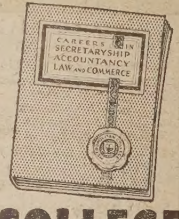

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